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"HONOLULU, SEPT 10--(UPI) - THE HONOLULU STAR-B BULLETIN REPORTED TODAY A TOP SECRET AIR FORCE EXPERIMENTAL JET PLANE, THE U-2, MAY BE FLYING FROM HAWAII ON 'RECONNAISSANCE AT UNREACHABLE ALTITUDES OVER RED CHINA AND SOVIET RUSSIA.'

"THE STORY, WRITTEN BY STAR-BULLETIN MILITARY REPORTER, MARK WATERS, DREW A FLAT 'NO COMMENT' FROM PACIFIC AIR FORCE HEADQUARTERS AT HICKAM AIR FORCE BASE WHERE THE PLANE HAS BEEN STATIONED FOR 'OPERATIONAL TESTS' SINCE LAST APRIL. HERETOFORE, THE AIR FORCE HERE HAS BEEN PERMITTED BY THE PENTAGON TO DIVULGE THE PLANE IS EQUIPPED WITH THE 'LATEST TYPES OF AIR-BORNE WEATHER DATA COLLECTION EQUIPMENT' AND THAT ITS WORK WOULD 'MATERIALLY AID THE AIR FORCE BALLISTIC MISSILE AND SPACE ROCKET FIRINGS FROM VANDENBERG AIR FORCE BASE ALONG THE PACIFIC MISSILE RANGE.'

"WATERS DESCRIBED THE U-2 AS ONE OF 29 NOW BEING USED BY THE AIR FORCE AND SAID IT COULD FLY 'ABOVE 70,000 FEET IN RARIFIED ATMOSPHERE AT THE FRINGES OF SPACE.' HE REPORTED THE PLANE COULD 'CRUISE FOR HOURS BEYOND THE REACH OF ANY KNOWN AIRCRAFT AND PERHAPS HAS ANTI-RADAR TO WARD OFF DETECTION BY UNFRIENDLY RADAR.'

"WATERS SPECULATED THAT IT WAS A SPACE U-2 'A PILOT ON FORMOSA' REFERRED TO LAST SPRING WHEN WATERS VISITED THERE AND WAS TOLD BY THE PILOT THAT 'THE CHINESE PEOPLES ARMY CANT MOVE AN ARTILLERY PIECE WITHOUT IT BEING SEEN AND REPORTED BY OUR HIGH FLYING RECONNAISSANCE PLANES.'

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"WATERS SAID OTHER REPORTS OF THE PLANE INDICATES:

A. IT HAS TAKEN OVERHEAD PHOTOGRAPHS OF HURRICANES WHILE FLYING MORE THAN 15 MILES HIGH.

B. THE RESULTS OF ITS WORK ARE BEING UTILIZED BY ALL BRANCHES OF THE ARMED SERVICES.

"WATERS SAID 'THE TRUE MISSION OF THE MYSTERY PLANE, NOW HIGHLY CLASSIFIED, MAY BE MORE FANTASTIC THAN THE WILDEST SUPPOSITIONS.' WATERS SAID THE U-2 CARRIES ONLY A PILOT AND IS POWERED BY A SINGLE PRATT AND WHITNEY J-57 ENGINE. HE SAID ITS WING SPAN IS SO GREAT THAT OUTRIGGER WHEELS MUST SUPPORT IT ON THE GROUND. WHEN TAKING OFF, WATERS SAID, GROUND CREW-MEN RIDE ON EACH WING HOLDING A WHEELED DOLLY IN PLACE UNTIL THE PLANE GAINS ENOUGH SPEED TO SUPPORT ITS LONG WINGS WITHOUT SCRAPING THE GROUND."

2. FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF REPLY BY USAF OFFICIALS, ALSO CARRIED UPI:

"WASHINGTON, SEPT 11--(UPI)--AIR FORCE OFFICIALS DECLINED TO COMMENT TODAY ON A REPORT IN THE HONOLULU STAR BULLETIN ABOUT RECONNAISSANCE FLIGHTS BY A NEW U-2 JET PLANE.

"BUT AN AIR FORCE SPOKESMAN SAID THE EXISTENCE OF THE PLANE IS 'NO SECRET'. HE ADDED THAT IT IS POWERED BY A SINGLE PRATT-WHITNEY J-57 TURBO JET ENGINE, CAN FLY AT HIGH ALTITUDES, AND HAS EXTRA LONG WINGS WITH OUTRIGGERS.

"HE LAUGHED AT THE REPORT THAT THE CREWMEN OF THE PLANE RIDE THE WINGS ON TAKEOFF."